Rural Society, Social Inclusion and Landscape Change in Central and Eastern Europe

Bell, S, Peneze, Z, Montarzino, A, Aspinall, P & Nikodemus, O 2009, 'Rural Society, Social Inclusion and Landscape Change in Central and Eastern Europe: A Case Study of Latvia' Sociologia Ruralis, vol 49, no. 3, pp. 295-326

RURAL SOCIETY, SOCIAL INCLUSION AND LANDSCAPE CHANGE IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE: A CASE STUDY OF LATVIA

Bell, S. [1,] Montarzino, A. [2], Peneze, Z. [3]and Nikodemus, O [3]

1. OPENspace Research Centre, Edinburgh College of Art, 70 Lauriston place, Edinburgh, EH3 9DF, UK

2. School of the Built Environment, Heriot Watt University, Riccarton, Edinburgh, EH14 4AS

3. Faculty of Geography and Earth Sciences, University of Latvia,
19 Raiņa blvd., LV-1586, Latvia

Author for correspondence: Phone +44 331221 6277; Fax +44 331 21 6277; e-mail: s.bell@eca.ac.uk

ABSTRACT

The countryside of Europe is undergoing many social, economic and environmental changes as a result of de-population and agricultural land abandonment. This trend, driven in part by wide disparity of income levels between rural and urban inhabitants, is particularly evident in the Central and Eastern European c countries such as Latvia that joined the EU in 2004 and in 2007. Research was undertaken in Latvia in 2003, the year before it joined the EU to explore those trends as manifested in the relationship of people to the countryside using focus groups and a questionnaire survey. The results showed that although Latvians retain a strong regard for their traditional countryside landscape there is a range of socio-economic barriers, especially the lack of services, which are some of the drivers of out-migration from the countryside to towns or to other countries. Unless these drivers are addressed in rural socio-economic policy the remaining people, many of them the older generation, are likely to become increasingly marginalised while the countryside will continue to become abandoned and the cultural landscape will deteriorate further.

KEYWORDS: Landscape research; land use change; migration; social exclusion; rural deprivation; place theory.

INTRODUCTION

Since the late 1980s research into social exclusion in Europe has focused on urban areas where problems of low income, poor housing, unemployment and inequality of access to services are most obvious and concentrated (Atkinson, 2000; Musterd and Ostendorf, 1998). Much less research has been carried out on the issues facing rural dwellers, despite the fact that rural demography, especially since the collapse of the communist system some 16 years ago, has been changing to the point that rural depopulation, accompanied by land abandonment has become a phenomenon right across Europe (MacDonald et al, 2000; Westhoek et al, 2006).

What is clear from these demographic trends is that (mainly young) people leave the countryside to find work in towns and cities or to travel abroad to work, while the older people tend to remain behind (Ogg, 2005). Rural levels of income tend to be lower, access to services (transport, shopping, medical and social care) is usually more limited and the quality of housing is often poorer than in urban or suburban areas (European Commission Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, 2005; Fahey et al., 2005). Conversely, the environment of rural areas may be better, being less polluted, with cleaner water, more nature (wildlife, natural habitats), less traffic, lower crime rates and a strong sense of community. People may also grow a proportion of their own food and be capable of self-reliance and self-sufficiency within a network of community support well into old age.

As a result of these social and economic trends, together with other factors such as changes in land-ownership structures, the environment of rural areas is also undergoing significant change such as land abandonment, colonisation of fields by forest and a loss of traditional landscape elements. Within the frame of the European Landscape Convention (Council of Europe, 2004) signatory countries have undertaken to protect and conserve cultural landscapes, of which many rural areas are key examples. This can only be achieved if viable populations continue to live there and manage the landscape, with or without national or EU support measures such as grants and subsidies.

This paper explores the phenomenon of social change in rural Latvia, one of the three former Soviet countries to join the European Union in 2004, examining some of the reasons why people leave or stay in the countryside and the implications for the remaining residents, especially older people and for the changing countryside landscape. It presents a subset of data from a larger research project looking at landscape change in a broader context (Bell et al, 2007; Bell and Montarzino, 2007; Bell et al 2008).

The context: CEE countries and rural demographic changes

Right across Europe major demographic changes are taking place (Eurostats, 2006). The populations of some countries – mainly the former Eastern bloc or former Soviet countries (the so-called Central and Eastern European or CEE countries) - are in decline as a whole, e.g. Bulgaria by 5.9% annually and Latvia by 5.4%. The western European countries are mainly experiencing an increase in population (e.g. the UK by 3.2%, Germany by 1.9%, Ireland by 15.3%), although much of this is by immigration rather than natural increase.

In terms of rural population, while the general picture over most of Europe is that of declining numbers, there is variation from region to region (Eurostats, 2006), with the rural population increasing in some places - e.g. the UK, where this takes place through the

process of counter-urbanisation, even if pockets of depopulation remain (Spencer, 1997; Stockdale, 2005).

At the point at which those CEE countries joined the EU in 2004 (with the exception of Bulgaria and Romania which joined in 2007) an assessment of the future prospects for their rural areas showed a complex pattern (IAMO, 2004). A cluster analysis of regions at the NUTS-2 and NUTS-3 levels (NUTS stands for the Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics) identified three types of regions:

- Cluster A: Agrarian lowest income regions with a very high unemployment rate;
- Cluster B: Agrarian low income regions; and
- Cluster C: Average developed middle income regions with a high unemployment rate.

The IAMO study showed that there are several main features that drive the patterns of income and employment, out-migration and the resulting depopulation.

First, there is usually a broadly dual farm structure(Cristiou, 2005), with, on the one hand, a few very large and profitable enterprises on the other many very small-sized farms, of which the land parcels may also be considered fragmented (Lerman et al., 2004; Lerman, 2000), run at a subsistence level or on a part-time basis. This leads to a situation of low incomes where capital stock – fixed assets and machinery - is usually old and of poor quality and it cannot be improved very easily due to a shortage of financial capital or credit availability, thus reducing income-generating potential even further. As a result, with the exception of Estonia and the Czech Republic, farmers earn less than the average urban worker.
.
In Latvia there is an enormous difference between farm and average worker income as well as levels of employment and GDP per capita. GDP in Riga, the capital, has, in recent years, been nearly double that of Latgale, a remoter region in the east of the country, while unemployment in the latter has been, over recent years, three times higher than in Riga (Menshikov, 2002; Hazans, 2003). In Poland, Latvia and Romania, there is also a problem of hidden unemployment, with low labour productivity.

If people living in these impoverished rural areas (Cluster A and B regions) wish to improve their socio-economic well-being as well as to raise funds to invest in their farms, alternative employment is needed. Rural tourism is often seen as a major growth area with much potential but this depends on attractive landscapes and an infrastructure of accommodation and services, which in turn requires a viable population (Bell, 2003; Bell et al, 2007).

Rural living standards in the CEE countries are well below those of the urban areas in the same states, especially capital cities. In Poland, for example, the ratio of income in the poorest and the richest regions for the year 2000 was 1:5.4 and in Latvia, 1:4.3. Since 2000 the economy of the capital of Latvia, Riga, has boomed, so it is to be expected that this ratio has increased. Moreover, judging by the level of GDP per capita of the pre-2004 enlargement EU-15 countries, in some areas of Latvia, Romania and Bulgaria, people were living in extreme poverty.

Drivers of internal and external migration

The picture regarding out-migration in CEE countries is a complex one. While countries such as Hungary and Bulgaria actually register net in-migration, since 2004 there has also been a massive increase in out-migration, mostly to countries such as the UK, Ireland and the USA (Robila, 2007). Such drivers are complex and depend on a balance of so-called “push and

pull" factors (OECD, 2007; Schoorl et al, 2000) such as unemployment in the home region or country, income differences between regions and countries, job availability in host regions or countries, educational opportunities, family ties, the presence of groups from the same country in a host country supplying contacts and a social network, as well as living cost differences.

In Latvia – as a result of it being one of the poorest countries in the EU after Romania and Bulgaria – the case is extreme, with some 50 000 people (out of a population of some 2.3 million) reported to be working abroad, mainly in Ireland in 2007. Firm current statistics on this are hard to obtain and are unreliable, so for a general picture it is necessary to rely on reputable news media at the present time. According to news reports, in some of the remotest and most rural regions of Latvia – such as Latgale in the east "Some villages there have found themselves home only to grandparents and grandchildren, as almost everyone of working age has left" (BBC, 2006). It is currently predicted that most of these people will not be permanent migrants, eventually returning to their communities. These out-migrants bring home much needed money and would be able to start making investments into their farms. However, those involved in internal urban-rural migration, in particular, those who leave the countryside for the capital city Riga, are less likely to return home to their original villages.

Another way of increasing income is by commuting from the rural areas to the towns where there is more work. This has been a feature for some time in CEE countries as well as other parts of Europe. It depends on what is perceived as the marginal commuting distance from an employment centre, so that some areas may be too far away for realistic daily commuting (Barker and Connolly, 2006) However, not only are roads in many areas in poor condition but the cost of cars and petrol is also relatively higher than in western Europe. In Latvia, for example, the cost of petrol is 66% of the cost in the UK but incomes are only about 40% of those in the UK, thus making commuting very expensive. Moreover, while bus fares are still cheap, the bus networks are limited, particularly in regions where settlements are widely dispersed around the countryside. Young, male workers are more likely than young, female workers to commute, owing to the latter's family and domestic commitments.

It may be relevant to note that rural infrastructure tends to be in a poor condition in most of the CEE countries. By this is meant the physical, social, financial and market structures. While the physical infrastructure of roads, houses and public buildings has deteriorated (Nikodemus et al., 2005), the situation in other ways has become a vicious cycle whereby, as younger people leave and a region becomes depopulated, it is more difficult to maintain or improve services, especially where social infrastructure (such as hospital or health clinic provision) needs to be centralised to be able to modernise it (IAMO, 2004).

How the factors outlined above impact on the future of the countryside, socially, economically and environmentally, is the subject of a study carried out in Latvia. The research questions addressed in this paper are as follows:

1. What are the main factors that affect whether people will live or continue to live in the countryside?
2. How attached are people to the countryside landscape and how do those attachments affect their actions and perceptions?
3. What are the likely prognoses for the future of the countryside, socially, economically and environmentally?

Background and context to the research

Latvia is one of three small countries lying on the south-eastern shore of the Baltic Sea. It has a surface area of 64.5 thousand square kilometres, thus lying, in terms of size, between Ireland (70.2) and the Netherlands (41.5). With a population just under 2.3 million (Latvian Bureau of Statistics, 2006), which declined by nearly 5% in 2005 alone, Latvia has a population density of 37 persons per square kilometre. This density is nearly half that of Ireland (57 per square kilometre) and ten times less dense than the Netherlands (397 per square kilometre).

Of the population, 67.9% are urban and 32.1% are rural dwellers (Ministry of Agriculture, 2002). This is a highly rural proportion by western European standards and the country remains very rural, with some 40% of the land being forest, a proportion that is increasing as a result of land abandonment. Fifty-eight% of the population are ethnic Latvians, the majority of the non-Latvians being Russian, Belorussian and Ukrainian and living in the towns and cities (Latvian Bureau of Statistics, 2006). Current estimates put 15% of the labour force working in agriculture and forestry (compared with 8% in Ireland and 2.2% in the Netherlands). Some 700,000 or 29% of the population live in Riga, the capital, further reducing the average population density per square kilometre.

The character of the countryside varies greatly in the terrain, soil types, proportion of forest to farmland and therefore, settlement patterns and economic potential (Melbārde et al, 2002). The more hilly areas are a landscape mosaic of forest and farmland with poorer soils, smaller farms and much abandoned or surplus land (the area of land abandoned between 1990-2005 is estimated to be 350-400,000 hectares (Ministry of the Environment, 2006); a report by the UN (Shvangiradze et al., 2000) estimates that by 2020 there will be 600,000 hectares of abandoned land in Latvia).

To find the elements that have defined the society, economics and landscape character of the countryside, it is necessary to go back to the Soviet era and to examine what happened after independence was regained. During Soviet times, all land was nationalised and farms were managed as collectives (*kollektivnoe khoziaistvo* or *kolkhoz*), with large-scale mono-cultural production (Melluma, 1994). After regaining independence, the land was handed back to the previous owners or their descendants, many of whom lived in other countries following earlier exile, away from the land in towns and cities or were not interested in farming, leading to the abandonment of many properties. People also became free to leave the collective farms to which they had previously been tied, so that the population and economic structure of the countryside changed. In agriculturally more marginal areas, such as the Vidzeme or Latgale uplands, where soils are less fertile, the rate of abandonment and forest colonisation has been greatest while the fertile flat plains of Zemgale in the south remain under arable farming.

The type of farm settlement and housing structure as well as migration patterns and employment has an impact on rural living conditions, social structure and quality of life (Deller et al, 2001; Kinsella et al, 2000; van der Ploeg et al, 2000). Traditionally, the prevalent farm settlement type in Latvia was one of dispersed farmsteads with no concentrated village centre. Following the incorporation of Latvia into the Soviet Union and the collectivisation of the farmland, populations were concentrated into blocks of flats in what became village centres (Lūse and Jakobsone, 1990; Grave and Lūse, 1990). This has resulted in a population still living either in these flats which were often of a poor construction quality or in the houses they have regained following land restitution but which are also in a poor state of repair and lacking modern services (Figs. 1a and b).

Figure 1a A Soviet Era block of flats in a village in central Latvia

Figure 1b An old rural house in a poor state of repair

During the 1990s, Latvian agriculture experienced profound changes following independence in 1991, particularly concerning land tenure and ownership (i.e. land reform) and the redistribution of non-land assets of collective farms to private farmers (Busmanis, 2001). In a working paper for FAO, Rolls (2001) points out that in Latvia, 95% of the agricultural production area was reported to be in private ownership, while at least half of the private farms lease the land to other farmers.

The accession of Latvia to the EU in 2004 also had a profound impact on the country. According to the World Bank, Latvia has recorded a considerable economic growth with a real GDP growth (10.2% in 2005 although declining during 2007-08), driven mainly by robust domestic demand. Although, according to the same source, unemployment in Latvia has been declining, 16% of the population lives in poverty, with income disparities as one of the main reasons for significant labour out-migration following EU accession (World Bank, 2006).

The research

The theoretical structure for the research was constructed around three key concepts: Canter's theory of place, Kelly's personal construct theory and facet theory. Canter's (1977) theory of place relies on the concept of 'behaviour settings' which Barker (1968) described as bounded patterns of human and nonhuman activity. This theory has been revised and further developed by Wicker (1979), who described behaviour settings as social constructs developed over time. Canter (1977; 1997) was inspired by both the theory of behaviour settings and phenomenology to develop his "psychology of place". In Canter's terms, place is seen as a product of physical attributes, human conceptions, and activities. Canter's theory of place has been applied in a number of projects looking at rural communities in Scotland to assess their social, economic and environmental interactions (Ward Thompson and Scott Myers, 2003; Ward Thompson et al, 2004; Bell, 2004). Those studies have shown that when people talk about their lives, their perceptions, the physical environment of the place where they live and the activities they undertake, they are not talking about separate elements but of elements bound in an interactive unit. Thus, theory of place permits the researcher to structure the research field around three attributes: physical environment, activities and perceptions, with the aim of disentangling the relationships amongst the attributes. For example, when the research deals with an attribute of the physical environment such as the changing landscape, the interactions between activities and perceptions with the landscape can be explored.

Underlying the theory of place is Kelly's personal construct theory (Kelly, 1955). In this, people constantly take new experiences and try to organise them into an existing structure based on past experience. The past experience becomes the lens though which new experiences are processed and interpreted. People look at these experiences in terms of similarities and differences and also in terms of significance to them and to others, based on perceptions mediated by their personal constructs. Such constructs may also be shared by social groups. Thus, the data extracted from focus group discussions or questionnaires can be evaluated in terms of how these constructs are assembled and to whom they belong. Since people make decisions based on perceptions of what they believe to be a given situation, personal or group constructs become important. A sense of national identity is an example of a personal construct held by a group as is the sense of belonging to a particular village or location. Therefore, all results from any social science research based on asking people about their lives and future intentions must be seen through the lens of personal construct theory. Canter's theory of place allows the organisation of major factors that make up such constructs to be identified and made explicit, thus enabling the drivers of behaviour or perception to be identified amongst and between groups and individuals.

Research methods

The research was developed and organised using "Facet Theory" (Shye et al, 1994; Borg and Shye, 1995) which facilitates the explicit structuring of the central issues in the research and their relationships to one another. The methodology proceeded in a series of stages following the definition of the research questions. The approach involved the use of qualitative research, through the use of focus groups, as a means of uncovering the key issues associated with the research questions. These key issues were, however, not those of the researchers but of the people being studied. This avoids the preconceptions of the researchers affecting the data gathering. While the literature review may help to identify important areas to be covered by the research, under the tenets of the theories described above, it is important that social science research is, to some extent, "user-led" in order to identify the major elements that

contribute to the personal or group constructs and which relate to the physical environment, activities and perceptions.

As well as providing valuable data, the focus group analysis provides a route to the development of the content of a questionnaire used to collect quantitative data. The questions (or statements) can be derived from the analysis of the focus groups, classified into the three categories of physical environment, activities and perceptions. As well as creating a set of statements that are relevant to the specific research questions, this approach enables the results of the quantitative analysis to be embedded in the context provided by the qualitative research.

Focus groups

Five focus groups were held to collect data for the qualitative stage of the research. The groups were organised so as broadly to reflect the regional differences in landscape, population and settlement and to represent the differences between rural and city dwellers. Three of the groups took place in rural areas: Jaungulbenes pagasts (a *pagasts* is a rural municipality – masculine singular nouns in Latvian end in "s") in the region known as Vidzeme in central Latvia; Kaplavas pagasts in Latgale, the south-eastern portion of the country; Gudenieku pagasts in Kurzeme in the west. Two focus groups were also held in the capital, Riga – one was of master students at the university, another of an old people's club. In total, 46 people took part in the groups – 30 women and 16 men. The groups were set up using local contacts in the pagasts administrations or through social organisations. This is normal practice to get a group of people for such a purpose. At this stage, a representative sample is not necessary.

The discussions were semi-structured and based on a predetermined set of eight starter questions defined by the researchers but deliberately phrased as broadly as possible in order to encourage a discussion that would lead to the emergence of different opinions and the raising of different issues:

1. What do you understand by the notion of "countryside"?
2. What do you understand as the difference between "the Latvian landscape" and "the landscape of Latvia"?
3. How do you evaluate the present landscape compared with that of the Soviet era or the pre-war first Latvian Republic times?
4. What do you think of the visual appearance of fields that have become overgrown?
5. What do you think is the EU financial support needed for conserving the countryside, including afforestation of abandoned agricultural lands, grazing or mowing overgrown meadows?
6. Should land in Latvia be sold to foreigners to tidy up the landscape?
7. What do you imagine the countryside to be like in the future?
8. Do you feel like you are living in a marginal area? (Only applied to the residents of the rural pagasts.)

The discussions were allowed to run freely and lasted between 55 minutes and 1 hour 20 minutes. Some of the questions triggered a lively discussion that was wide-ranging and met the aspirations of the research to uncover a range of significant issues. Many were common to all groups, while some resulted in more discussion in some locations than others. The discussions were recorded, transcribed and their content was analysed to identify common

themes as well as regional differences and the results were used to develop the questionnaire in the next phase of the research as described above.

Questionnaire survey

The questionnaire was structured according to Facet theory, with the core questions (or statements) framed as personal constructs of physical environment, activities and perceptions. Respondents were asked to rate each question along a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from "Strongly agree" to "Strongly disagree". Some sections were included for respondents to note down words that they associated with the Latvian countryside. The questionnaire was produced in Latvian and Russian in order to collect data from the two main language/cultural groups in the country. As well as the questions, a set of demographic data was also collected, including gender, age, educational level, employment, family background (whether Latvian or not), birthplace (in Latvia or not) and whether the respondent had spent his/her childhood in the countryside. The data were collected in six pagasts distributed across each region in order to pick up any variations between them – Dzerbene and Vecpiebalga in Vidzeme, Nautreni in Latgale, Vecsaule in Zemgale and Bartas and Priekule in Kurzeme. Urban centres sampled were Riga, Kuldiga in Kurzeme (a very Latvian town) and Rezekne in Latgale, with a high proportion of Russians in the population. The questionnaire data was collected using a stratified random sample. Additional stratification was by age and gender, so that the analysis would be able to explore some of what were expected to be key differences in views among the population. The questionnaires were completed during a face-to-face interview. The target was 50 completed questionnaires from each location (nine in all). In total, after checking and removing incorrectly completed questionnaires, 435 were entered into the database for analysis. This is a large sample, with adequate numbers for each location to allow for comparison between locations.

The initial analysis explored differences in the data using Kruskall Wallis and Mann-Whitney U tests. This was followed by factor analysis which examines associations between the items of the questionnaire. Finally, regression analysis was used in order to predict the main factors that affect people's desire to live in the countryside in order to answer the first research question.

Results

Focus groups

This section concentrates on those aspects of the focus groups that are relevant to the research questions in this paper. The focus group participants were generally rather pessimistic about the future and were worried by the perceived trend that the younger generations were moving away from the countryside. This did not necessarily imply a rejection of the rural way of living but seemed to be related to factors such as the availability of services and job opportunities. When the student discussion group were asked if they would like to live in the country and take up farming, they answered in the negative. They did not mind living in the country, but they would rather work in Riga or in a nearby town. Some interviewees would be happy to live in the countryside on the condition that it had a good infrastructure and their job was not far away.

Several interviewees from the countryside stated that they did not see any prospects for the future therefore they had no idea what to do. Some interviewees from the Jaungulbene focus group expressed the view that in the future, agriculture will be restricted to big farms as the only profitable form of production.

Perceptions of the landscape are associated with traditions, family ties, patriotism, social networks, economic well-being and life experiences. The focus group participants articulated an image of the traditional or archetypal Latvian landscape as being that of a farmstead with thatched roofs set in an orchard with hay fields and a bathhouse, not far from the forest edge. Oak and lime trees, a pond, storks nesting and hay cocks in the fields set off this bucolic scene. The role of these elements in helping to form a sense of Latvian identity is discussed elsewhere (Bell, 2008). They noted how this contrasts with the apparent realities of the landscape where there are abandoned fields turning to scrub, dilapidated buildings, derelict remains of the collective farms and too heavy felling of the forests.

Many people have aspirations to remain in the countryside for the positive values of clean air, peacefulness, fresh water, strong community connections and family roots, but only as long as they do not have to work there and can have the same level of services as their urban counterparts.

The results of the focus groups show a complex relationship between people and place, with economic realities appearing to provide significant push factors leading to out-migration, especially of the younger and better educated people such as the student group, even if most of them stay in Riga. There is a strong identity with the place but this seems to be associated with a romanticised view of the traditional landscape rather than the present reality.

The questionnaire

The results for the questionnaire fall into two sections. The first deals with the words interviewees were asked to provide (up to ten) that came to mind when they thought of the Latvian countryside. This revealed a very strong dichotomy in their perceptions (Table 1). On the one hand, there were very positive views of the countryside in general, especially the physical environment; furthermore, those of the townspeople (which included a non-Latvian proportion) showed a marked nostalgia for an idyllic rural landscape. On the other hand, there was also an association of the countryside with negative social and physical factors, such as unemployment, poverty, hard work and alcoholism. There was no prompting for these words and the choice demonstrates the relevance of the theory of place, where the mix of words about the physical environment is mixed with those about activities and perceptions.

Table 1 Words used to describe the Latvian countryside: simplified lists divided into positive and negative words

Positive words	Negative words
Diverse, beautiful nature	Uncultivated, abandoned fields.
Untouched, pure environment	Felled forests.
Fresh, clean air.	Hard farm work.
Quietness.	Poverty.
Birthplace, homeland.	Unemployment.
Childhood reminiscences.	Alcoholism.
Warbling of birds.	Desolation.
Forests.	Few inhabitants.
	Flow of youth from country to town

One of the key factors that affect the perception of the landscape and seem to account for much of the nostalgic feelings expressed in the findings is the time spent in the countryside as

a child. Nearly 82% of the interviewees now living in the towns and cities (Fig. 2) grew up in or visited the countryside as children. This highlights the character of the population, many people having only relatively recently become urban dwellers, and it has a marked effect on the idea of what the countryside is or should be, as well as accounting for much of the association with the sense of Latvian identity. As will become clear from the analysis below, this turns out to be a strong predictor for choices about living in the countryside for the urban dwellers.

Figure 2. The proportions of the urban population who spent part or all of their childhood in the countryside.

The social and economic aspects of living in the countryside

The important social and economic questions about continuing to live in the countryside form the basis for the exploration of the motivations to stay or leave the countryside. These related to four statements in the questionnaire, developed from the issues raised in the focus groups. The statements were phrased slightly differently for rural dwellers who already live in the countryside and for urban dwellers who may wish to do so:

"I will (continue to) live in the countryside"
"I will (continue to) live in the countryside if more services are available"
"I will (continue to) live in the countryside if there is employment available"
"I would like to bring up my children in the countryside"

The first section of the results' analysis examines the questionnaire responses to the four questions, focussing on those demographic aspects which emerged as significant from the Kruskall-Wallis test.

"I will (continue to) live in the countryside"

This is a simple statement about preference. The rural dwellers especially tend to agree with the statement quite strongly, as might be expected. This might be seen as a way of identifying those who are country people at heart and who will make certain sacrifices in material standards of living in order to continue to live in the countryside. However, it is interesting

that some urban dwellers also intend to live there. The next questions show what the circumstances for a return might be.

The variations according to age present a strong pattern. When the urban dwellers are excluded, it is possible to see the intentions of those who live there at present (Fig. 3). In this case, the younger age groups are far less interested in living in the countryside than the older age groups. The mid-age range sample shows more mixed views, some wanting to stay in the countryside, others wanting to leave. This reflects findings by Nikodemus et al (2004) where a similar set of attitudes was found to be the case.

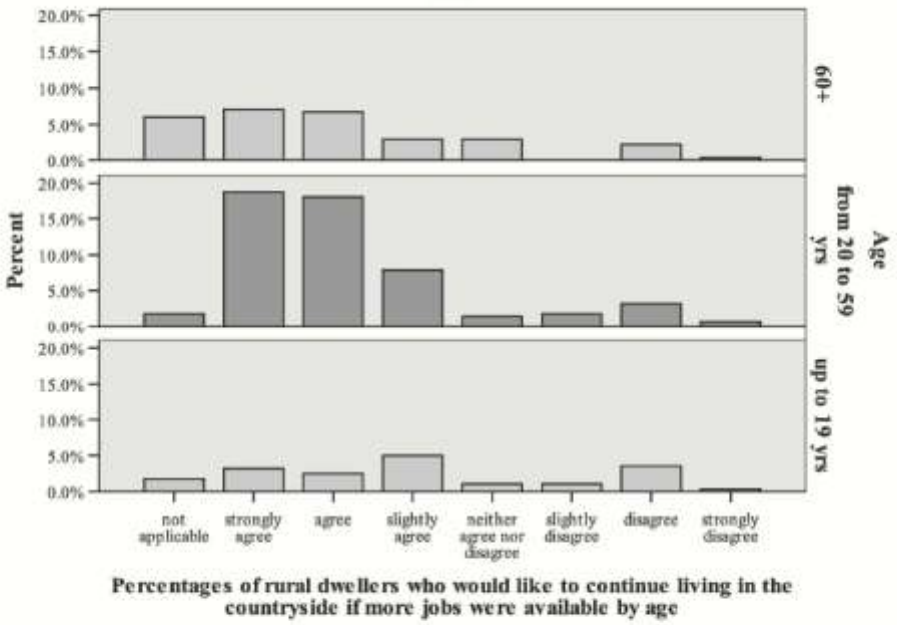

Figure 3. The proportion of different age groups of rural dwellers who wish to continue living in the countryside.
164x131mm (600 x 600 DPI)

"I will (continue to) live in the countryside if more services are available"
There was a clear preference among current rural dwellers for continuing to live in the countryside if services are available, suggesting that the lack of services in some areas is a major problem. Services include shops, public transport, schools and medical facilities, postal services and so on (Fig. 4). This list is similar to the situation found in rural locations in other countries (Bell, 2003; Bell et al, 2007).

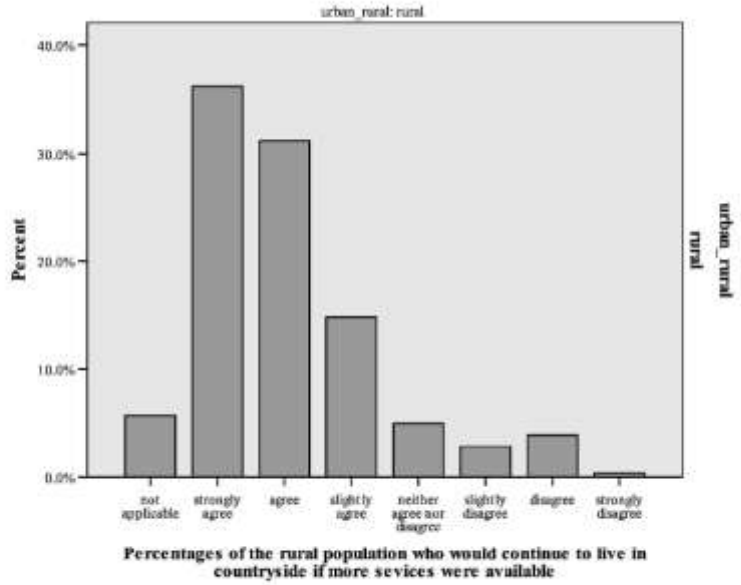

Figure 4. The degrees of preference of rural dwellers for continuing to live in the countryside if services are available
164x131mm (600 x 600 DPI)

The pattern varies by age, with more people in the older age groups tending to agree and fewer in the younger groups, although the mix of rural and urban dwellers in the sample (Fig. 5) distorts this pattern. This pattern could be related to the preferences of younger people to leave to go to cities or to work abroad. It also flags up the issue of the older people who want to continue to live there and for whom medical and social services are particularly important, as well as transport.

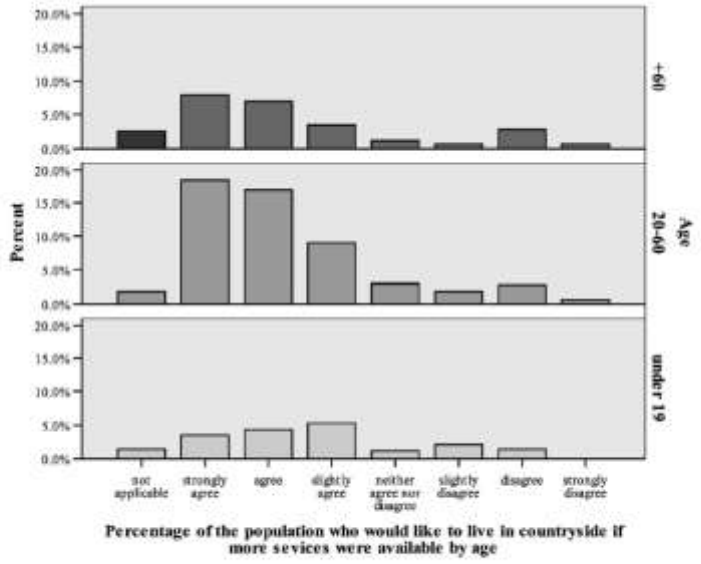

Figure 5: The pattern of different age groups and their preferences for continuing to live in the countryside if services are available.
164x131mm (600 x 600 DPI)

"I will (continue to) live in the countryside if there is employment available"
The response to this statement also shows a definite pattern, especially between urban and rural dwellers (Fig. 6). The question of employment seems not to be a decisive factor as to why people live in towns or cities as opposed to the countryside, but it is a factor affecting whether rural dwellers can continue to live there and as to whether people currently living in towns would wish to move back to the countryside. Clearly, people need an income. The question is then whether they actually work in the countryside or commute to towns for work, their choice depending on where they live and the degree of remoteness and distance from potential employers.

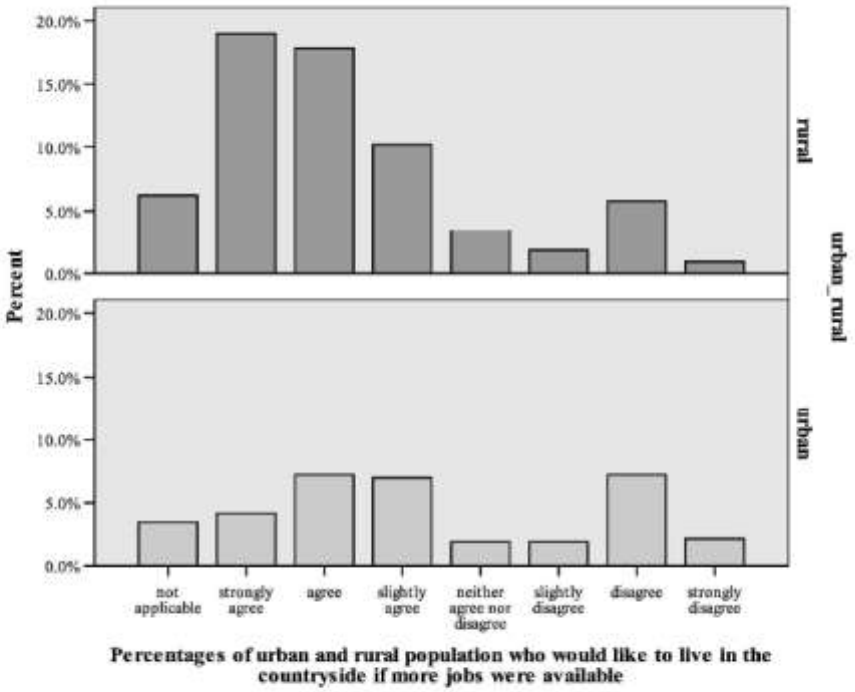

Figure 6. The degree of preference for continuing to live in the countryside if there is employment available, split between rural and urban dwellers.
164x131mm (600 x 600 DPI)

The pattern amongst different age groups is also interesting. With the sample aggregated into those under 20 years of age, those from 20 to 59 and those over 60, a clearer trend emerges (Fig. 7). For the younger age groups, especially teenagers and young adults, even the presence of jobs does not seem to make living in the countryside especially attractive when compared with the population aged over 20, although this pattern is more pronounced among the urban dwellers than among the rural population. More urban than rural people in all age groups consider that not even the presence of jobs makes the countryside attractive. The important groups are those between 20 and 59 who are of working age while the younger people are mainly in education. The older people include the retired and those who keep working on their small farms until they are not capable of doing so for health reasons.

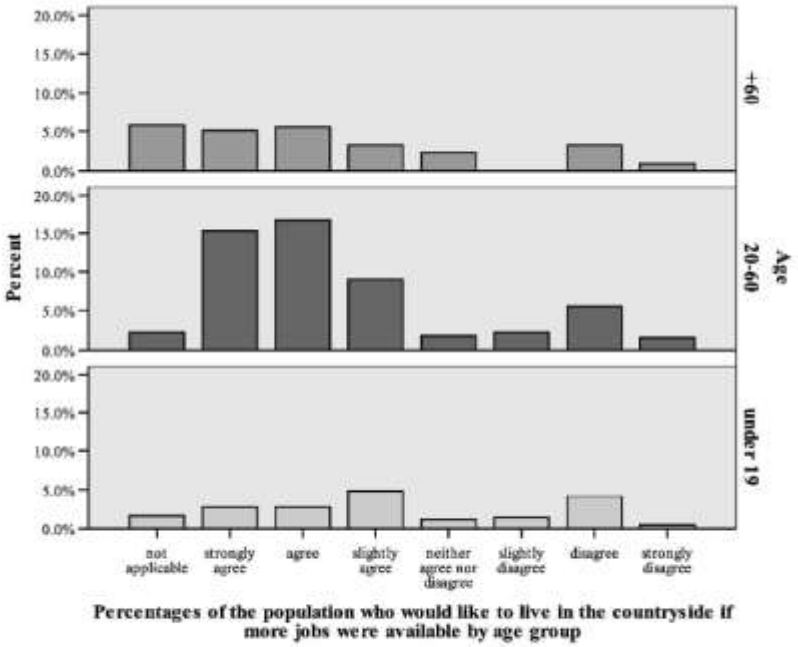

Figure 7. The preferences for continuing to live in the countryside if there are jobs available split by broad age groups
164x131mm (600 x 600 DPI)

Interestingly, the availability of more services would appear to make the countryside more attractive for both urban and rural dwellers than the availability of jobs. This may be affected by the improved life of those who live in the countryside – or who would like to return/move there – when services are good, even if they need or would prefer to commute to a town for a better job. This may also be connected with seeing services as more important in reducing feelings of isolation and being cut off from the rest of society, services that urban dwellers may have come to take for granted.

"I would like to bring up my children in the countryside"

The main variability in agreement with this question comes from the way in which the respondents were brought up themselves – those who spent all their childhood in the countryside, regardless of where they live now, show a much higher level of preference than those who did not or only spent a part of their childhood there. It could be inferred that being brought up in a place has a major influence on how adults subsequently see it, even if they experienced harder times compared with urban dwellers. Spending part of the time – perhaps on holiday or moving away to a town at some point during childhood - seems not to engender the same emotional association and a degree of place attachment (Fig. 8).

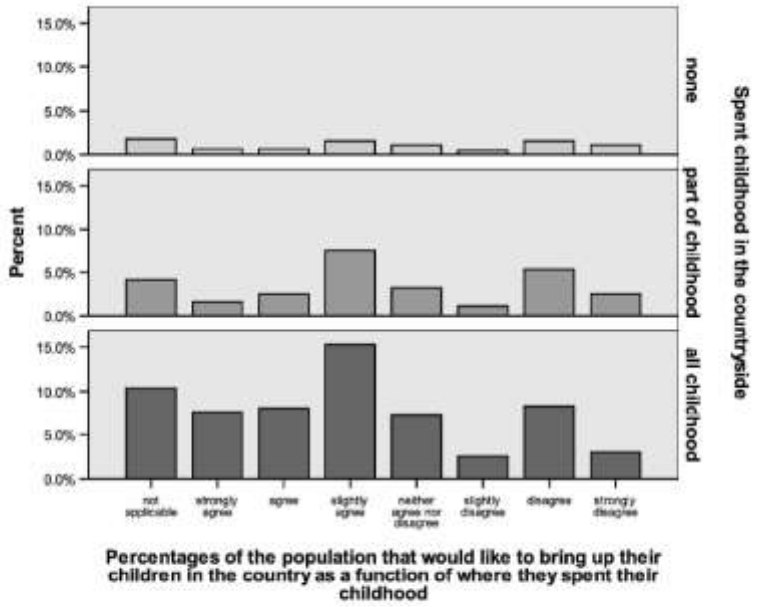

Figure 8: The proportions of those who would like to bring up their children in the countryside related to where they were raised themselves.
164x131mm (600 x 600 DPI)

The level of education of the respondents also shows some differences in preference (Fig. 9). Interestingly, it is those with the highest level of education that seem more willing to raise their children in the countryside. Furthermore, this applies equally to both urban and rural people. However, for all the other levels of education there is a clear difference between the urban and rural populations. Those who already live in the countryside seem more inclined to bring up their children there than the urban population. There are no noteworthy gender differences in relation to this variable, women being as likely as men to agree or disagree in their willingness to bring up the children in the country.

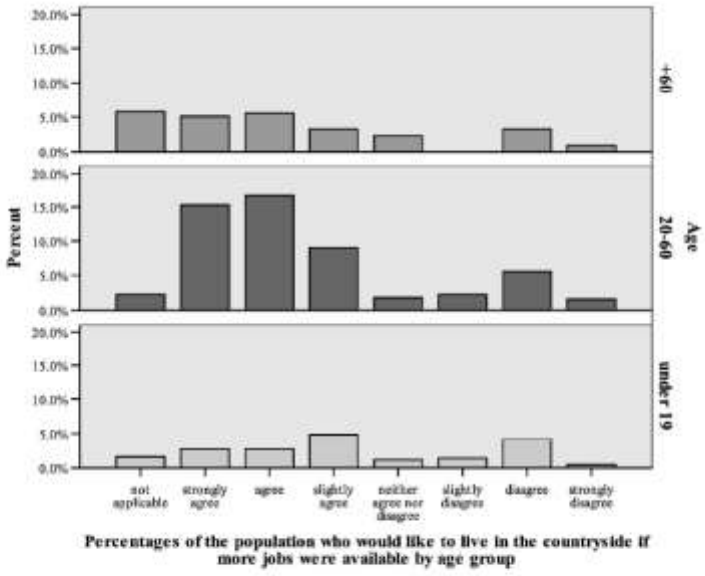

Figure 7. The preferences for continuing to live in the countryside if there are jobs available split by broad age groups
164x131mm (600 x 600 DPI)

The next part of the analysis takes the questions and starts to examine the deeper interactions between them and a range of demographic variables (gender was excluded as it was not significant). The starting point was the first question looking at the evidence that people had a desire to live, or continue to live, in the countryside. Using the questionnaire responses' analysis to this question was approached in three ways – by tests of difference, factor analysis and regression analysis.

a) Demographic variables and tests of difference – the 7-point Likert scale 'I wish to (continue to) live in the countryside' was converted into a binary variable reflecting those agreeing or disagreeing with the proposition. This binary variable was then used as a grouping variable to discover which other demographic or questionnaire items discriminated between its two states. Firstly, results are shown below for the demographic variables.

Table 2 Demographic variables and desire to live in the countryside

	Urban/rural dwellers	Age group	Employment status	Educational level	Family background (Latvian or non-Latvian)	Birthplace (Latvia or not)	Childhood experience of the countryside
Mann-Whitney U	7535.000	8605.000	8223.500	10673.500	8543.500	10472.500	7785.000
Wilcoxon W	10385.000	11455.000	11073.500	13523.500	55208.500	57137.500	54450.000
Z	-5.583	-3.725	-4.149	-.932	-5.094	-2.424	-5.069
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.351	.000	.015	.000

The Mann-Whitney U tests in Table 2 show that all the demographic variables, with the exception of education, discriminate significantly on the target Likert scale. In other words, those with a family background, birthplace or childhood in Latvia are more likely to agree with the statement. It is the rural, older and employed groups agreeing with the statement more than the urban, younger and unemployed/retired/homemaker groups.

b) Questionnaire items and factor analysis - the Likert scales of the entire questionnaire (of which a limited sub-set is the subject of this paper) were factor analysed. This is an appropriate analysis for attitudinal judgements. The appropriateness of the analysis met the criteria of the determinant =0.09; Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin =0.74; nonredundant residuals<50%. The analysis produced nine factor components meeting the eigen criterion of 1.0 and accounting for 56% of the variance in the data. Following a varimax rotation, the components were identified. These were related to continuing to live in the countryside; Latvian connections with the countryside; agricultural interventions; maintenance from landowners; tourism; nostalgia for past landscapes; forestry; economic support from the EU. The ninth factor was dropped on grounds of being a single variable factor. The first group of factors are those under investigation in this paper. It is interesting to note that the following questions were loaded (and therefore significantly correlated) with the key research question about the desire to live in the countryside. These were, in rank order of correlation:
    1. I will (continue to) live in countryside if more services are available
    2. I will (continue to) live in countryside if more jobs are available
    3. I would like to bring up my children in the countryside

c) Regression analysis – Table 2 shows that the most significant discriminator of the question about living (or continuing to) live in the countryside is whether someone lives

in an urban or rural area. As a consequence, two separate regressions were run – one for urban and one for rural dwellers.

Table 3 Variables predicting the desire to live in the countryside from urban dwellers

		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1	Gender (male/female)	-.726	.638	1.292	1	.256	.484
	Age	1.136	.973	1.363	1	.243	3.114
	Employment			5.154	2	.076	
	Employment (employed)	2.950	1.822	2.620	1	.106	19.103
	Employment (unemployed/pensioner/ homemaker)	.011	1.007	.000	1	.992	1.011
	Education	.116	.270	.186	1	.667	1.123
	Background (Latvian)			7.337	2	.026	
	Background (part Latvian)	-2.301	.876	6.902	1	.009	.100
	Background (not Latvian)	-2.475	1.168	4.485	1	.034	.084
	Birthplace (Latvia or not)	.322	1.127	.081	1	.775	1.380
	Childhood (spent all of the time in the countryside)			.116	2	.944	
	Childhood (spent part of the time in the countryside)	-.288	.911	.100	1	.752	.750
	Childhood (spent none of the time in the countryside)	-.084	.780	.012	1	.914	.920
	I will (continue to live in the countryside if services are available)	.313	.202	2.386	1	.122	1.367
	I will (continue to) live in the countryside if jobs are available	.594	.251	5.590	1	.018	1.812
	I would like to bring up my children in the countryside	.384	.148	6.711	1	.010	1.469
	Constant	-6.624	3.139	4.452	1	.035	.001

One immediate issue for rural dwellers was the distribution of respondents agreeing or disagreeing with the questionnaire statement. This distribution had almost 90% of

respondents wishing to continue to live in the countryside with only 29 respondents disagreeing. This extreme skewness compromises the classification rates from regression. However, significant predictors are noted. Firstly, binary logistic regression was run in two blocked stages. In the first block, demographic variables significantly discriminating on the target research question (living in the countryside) were placed in block 1 of the regression. Then in block 2, the questionnaire items which were significantly associated with the target variable from factor analysis were added.

The first block produced a significant difference from the baseline Chi Square= 41.7, df=11, $p<0.001$. Results showed that within the demographic variables, childhood experience was the only variable which was just significant at $p=0.05$. For the second block, Chi Square =50, df=3, $p<.001$. With the inclusion of the questionnaire items, the overall classification accuracy improved to 92%. Here the significant predictors in the total model were questionnaire items on the need for services and jobs in the countryside. Results from the urban dwellers were more balanced and the full regression output is shown in Table 3.

The first block produced a significant difference from baseline Chi Square=29.2, df=10, $p<.001$. For the second block, Chi Square = 55.3, df=3, $p<0.001$. Significant predictors in block 1 were all related to background $p=0.003$. With the inclusion of the questionnaire items the overall classification improved to 86%. In the total model, the significant predictors were background and questionnaire items on employment and the desire to bring up children in the countryside. Note that for the urban dwellers, the question on services in the countryside was not significant.

As a check on multicollinearity, the collinearity diagnostics showed no evidence of this, with no variable reaching the variance inflation factor criterion of 10 in either of the two regressions. (However, it should be noted that questions which are similar in wording to the target question are likely to elicit similar responses so the strong prediction from these items in block 2 is not surprising.)

An exploratory regression using SPSS answer-tree analysis and CART (Classification and Regression Tree) was carried out. The latter adds further information to conventional regression by indicating an optimal sequence and cut-off point for the predictor variables. The answer tree for urban dwellers and their demographic variables is shown in Fig 10 below.

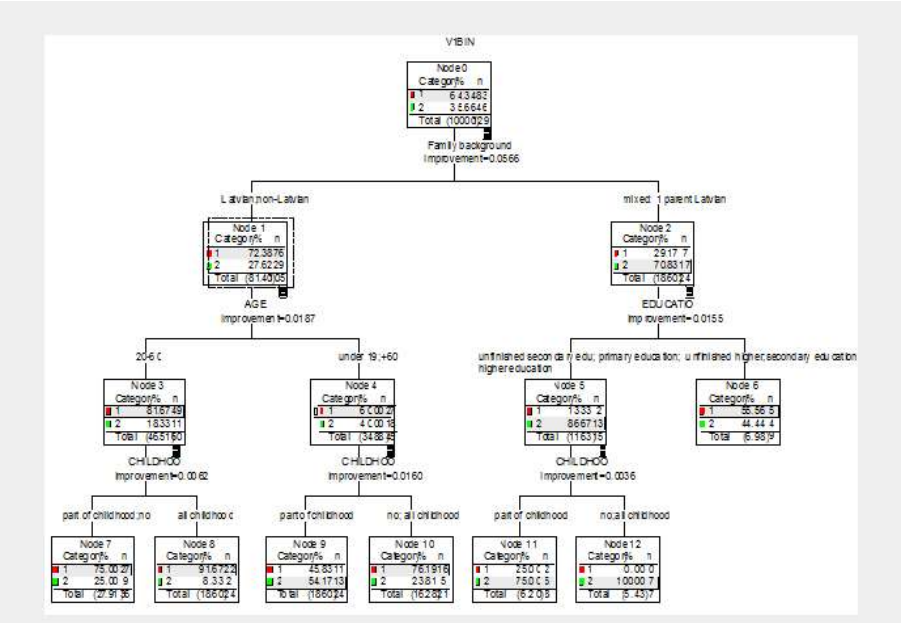

Figure 10 Answertree based on the first block of regression for urban inhabitants

The answer tree has an overall classification accuracy of 75% with an error rate se= 3%. The tree shows the most important predictor on living in the countryside to be family background. The second best discriminator at this first junction in the tree is childhood experience. The numbers here are highly skewed to category 1, with only 29 respondents in the smaller group so the high classification rate 92%, as in logistic regression, is somewhat misleading.

Finally, the two trees for the questionnaire responses in block two of the regressions are shown (Figs 11 and 12). Firstly, the tree for urban dwellers has at the top of the tree, bringing up children as the main predictor, closely followed by the need for jobs (Fig 13). The classification rate is high at 85% with an se of 3%.

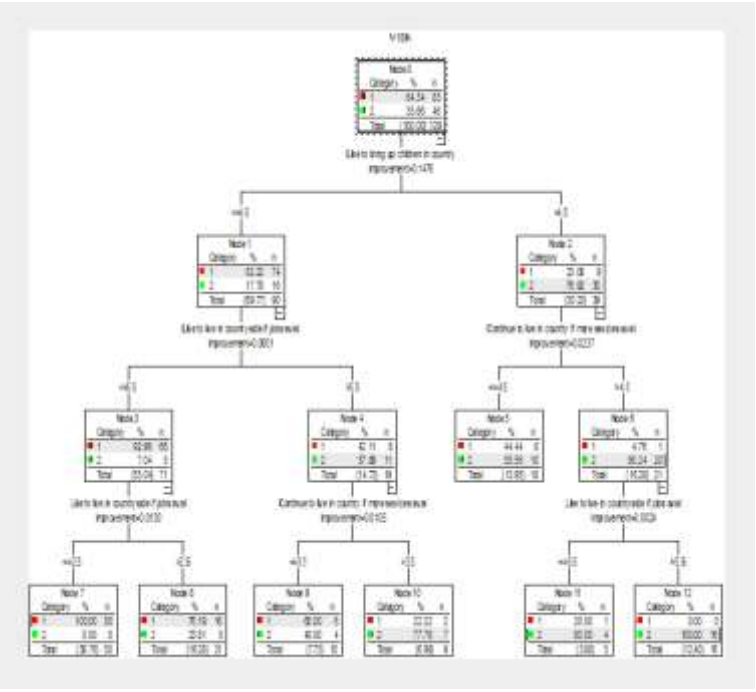

Figure 11 Answertree based on the second block of regression for rural inhabitants

The similar tree for the rural dwellers has the provision of services at the top of the tree with the question on bringing up children in a much less important role (Fig. 12). However, once again, the skewed distribution inflated the classification rate. With qualification, the resultant answer tree is shown below.

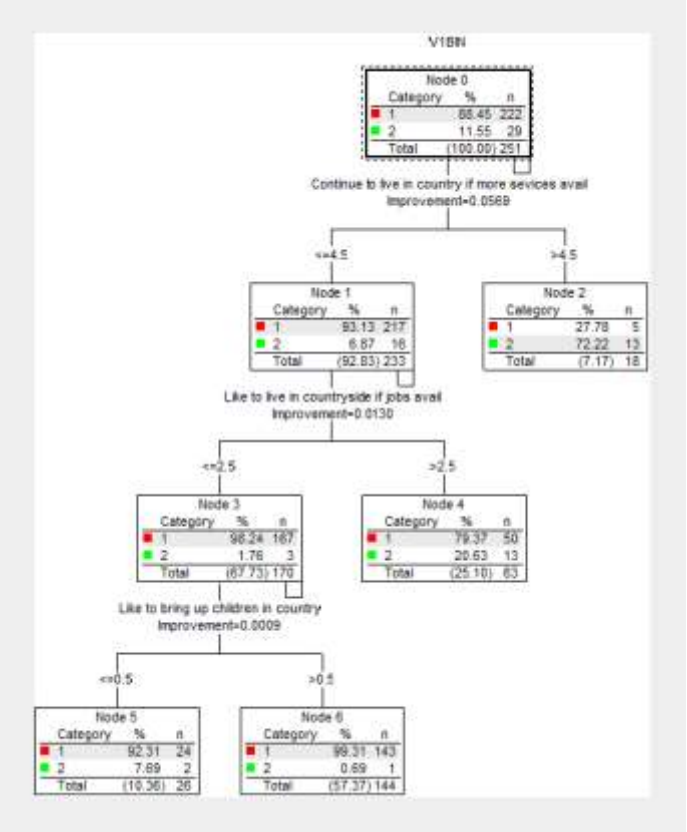

Figure 12 Answertree based on the second block of regression for urban inhabitants

The first research question deals with the main factors that affect whether people will continue to live in the countryside. These were identified in the focus groups as being mainly the availability of jobs and services but the questionnaire survey revealed a more complex picture. This can be summarised as follows:

- On the question of living (or continuing to live) in the countryside, there is much greater agreement by rural than urban inhabitants.
- On the two questions of living (or continuing to) live in the countryside if there are services and jobs available, there is more agreement by rural than urban people and less agreement by younger than older people. Of the two questions, services are more important than jobs (also see below).
- On the question of bringing children up in the countryside, there is much greater agreement by those who were brought up there themselves and by those with higher levels of education.
- By combining all demographics and looking for a broader pattern of significance, all the variables are significant except for education.
- The regressions showed some clear patterns between urban and rural inhabitants:
    - For rural inhabitants, the predictors of continuing to live in the countryside are services and jobs, in that order (bearing out the earlier analysis).

    - For urban inhabitants living in the countryside (and presumably therefore returning there), the predictors are firstly, family background (i.e. being Latvian) followed by employment and then the desire to bring up children in the countryside. Services are not a predictor.
- The answer trees show a slightly different picture:
    - In the first set from block one of the regression, for the urban sample, family background is the first predictor followed by childhood experience (i.e. being Latvian and brought up in the countryside) while for the rural inhabitants, it is simply employment.
    - In the second set of answer trees (block two of the regression), for the urban dwellers, it is the desire to bring up children followed by the childhood experience while for the rural people, the provision of services is the main predictor.

Although services appear in the research to be more important than jobs for rural inhabitants, the data show that jobs still play an important overall role in whether people continue to live in the countryside, move to urban areas or even work abroad. The massive increase in travel abroad to find work has been a phenomenon that started once Latvia joined the EU in 2004, after the research findings were collected. This trend bears out the perceptions and attitudes about unemployment and the desire to escape from a marginalised existence. Depending on how long this trend for overseas work continues, it also has implications for the people left behind, such as the old, retired and the children. In many ways, the wave of out-migration has been exactly what would be expected from the data.

The research findings are typical of people in other rural areas. In a study by Bell (2003), similar issues were raised of people wanting to continue to live in the Scottish countryside but finding that the lack of services to be a major obstacle to enjoying an adequate quality of life, even when income was not high but at least enough on which to survive.

Some of the urban population clearly still feel a strong attraction to the countryside because they would like to live there. Jobs and services are important for that. Bringing up children also seems to be a strong desire. Those of a Latvian background who were themselves raised in the countryside are most likely to wish to do so. This suggests that some of the people who have moved to the cities or towns, especially those starting a family, may decide to move back so as to give their children an attractive environment, as long as their job situation is no worse off, which may mean having to commute.

Looking at the social and economic aspects, picked up by the words used to describe the countryside, some of the negative factors such as the association with alcoholism may reveal aspects of the stress that is involved in surviving in a remote area with low income and a poor standard of living. This could be related to the facts noted in the introduction of the wide gap in income levels between Riga and the countryside (Hazans, 2003) and the disproportionate cost of fuel in Latvia that makes transport so expensive. It is not possible to be categorical about these inferences from the data but they point the way to further explorations.

The studies about the drivers of migration show that the balance between push and pull factors is significant. If the Latvian economy continues to grow relatively strongly, the wage differences between Latvia and the host countries such as the UK or Ireland will decrease relatively quickly so that the importance of this as the main reason for Latvians to work abroad will decrease. There is evidence of this beginning to happen in the case of the larger

Polish migration flows. If employment opportunities also increase in the regions, especially for educated people, the pull factor of the Riga economy and job market may also reduce. This still leaves the issues of commuting to towns where these jobs for educated people are likely to be located and the services available in the countryside as other factors to overcome. Commuting requires the use of a car for many people in areas where public transport is inadequate. Increases in fuel costs may reduce the effective commuting radius around the towns and cities. Thus, people may live prefer to live in countryside areas within commuting range and less so in remoter locations. If bus services were to improve, the commuting range may increase in some places, although buses often take longer to cover the same distance. Another factor affecting commuting is the quality of the roads, which in Latvia have been in a bad condition, especially difficult in winter. Recent grants of EU structural funds include a large element for infrastructure improvements (Government of Latvia, 2005) which bring some further areas within the commuting range of regional centres.

The role of services proves to be important. Most of these are likely to be located in towns where economies of scale and the need to centralise services results in consolidation of services to regional centres. Shopping, financial services, medical care, entertainment and other services will also tend to attract younger, educated people, especially those moving out from Riga, for example, to live where they are easily accessible.

The second research question looks at the attachment of people to the countryside landscape and how those attachments affect their actions and perceptions. All age groups recognise a range of typical countryside elements that are associated with making the traditional countryside landscape and which appear to be important in defining place attachment. This is perhaps to be expected, since there is a greater proportion of the population still living there or who were brought up there than in many other countries. This seems to be strong enough for some people to wish to continue to live in the countryside despite the problems of jobs and services but not for others. It may also lie behind the desire – and the predictors found in the regression and answer-tree analysis – for urban dwellers to bring up their children in the countryside.

This place attachment can also be shown to be strongly related to age and it might be expected that as the older people gradually die, the younger ones for whom this connection appears to be weaker will change the nature of the relationship. Thus, fewer people may wish to live in the countryside in future, even if jobs and services are improved. Since there is also a close association between positive perceptions of the countryside and having been brought up there, it seems likely that as Latvians become more urbanised and fewer people are brought up or spend time there, this association may weaken.

The third research question concerns the likely prognoses for the future of the countryside, socially, economically and environmentally. As noted above, structural funds aim at territorial cohesion and at helping to even out the disparities between regions and the capital but they will take some time to come into effect. The reduction in the effect of the factors pushing people to migrate abroad for work may reduce the rate of rural depopulation and may even reverse it if people return home and invest their earnings in their houses and businesses. The strong place attachment may continue to exert its effect on the over-20s but for the younger generation who move away for education and to work in jobs requiring skills then it may already be too late and these people may be lost to the more marginal regions, although from the results on wishing to bring up children in the countryside, there may be a

counter-flow, at least to those areas within commuting distance. This will still have an effect on the more remote and marginal areas beyond commuting distance.

Already, since the restitution of land to the former owners, many people are not resident on the land and have neglected it, which is one reason so much land is abandoned and reverting to forest. If the descendants of older people still living in the landscape do not want to live there, for whatever reason (such as it being located beyond the marginal commuting distance), then the property may be sold, may be abandoned or may be used as a holiday house with the land let out to other farmers or left unmanaged. Some of the more attractive areas may then become significant holiday locations but fail to maintain a year-round viable population or be able to support an adequate level of services for those who remain living there. Currently, Latvians tend to spend a good part of the summer in the country and this could continue to maintain the strong cultural association of the countryside as part of the sense of Latvian identity if children also continue to spend their summers there. Thus, there appear to be different ways of interpreting the trends which may result in a reduction or maintenance of the attachment to the rural landscape, depending on how different factors eventually manifest themselves in behaviour.

The economic future of the countryside depends on the availability of income-generating activities. Forestry is one area where the rural economy has been strong and the prognosis is good (FAO, 2000). Agriculture is not so promising in the poorer areas. Tourism has been slow to develop and there may be opportunities for the building up of tourism businesses. This relies on the environment being attractive and well-maintained (Bell, 2003), which in turn depends on landscape management by farmers and others, as noted above. However, this also opens opportunities for educated people and those with experience of the hospitality industry abroad to develop businesses and employment that is not associated with farming or other resource-based jobs.

The maintenance of the traditional landscape has been identified by Busmanis et al (2001) as dependent on the traditions of the rural lifestyle and the single farm integrated into the natural environment. This means that the poor socio-economic and marginalised condition of many people needs to be overcome not just as a means of enabling rural residents to be fully included in Latvian society but of ensuring that this valued rural landscape is maintained and conserved. The issue of the farm types and the economic weakness of many small farms were highlighted in the introduction. The pattern in Latvia varies from region to region. Zemgale, the area where Vecsaules pagasts, one of the sample areas is located, has larger farms likely to be economically competitive, while large parts of Vidzeme and much of Latgale contain these small inefficient farms. These also happen to be the places where many of the traditional landscape elements remain.

A trend that is also developing is for people who currently live in flats in large Soviet-era apartment complexes in the suburbs of Riga to move to single family dwellings on new developments on the edge of the city or in the surrounding countryside. As the economy develops and incomes rise, this trend may continue and the type of gentrification of the countryside, with commuters living there that is common in countries such as the UK (Spencer, 1997) may become more popular (Stenning, 2004). This trend may in part be explained by the predictor from the regressions and answer-tree analysis for urban people wanting to bring up their children in the countryside. If the transport infrastructure improves, the potential commuting distance from Riga could increase to encompass a significant area of the country, leading to a revitalisation of the wider region. This may help to keep some

infrastructure available and help to maintain houses but may not have much effect on land abandonment, the poverty of or access to services for older people or, for that matter, the fate of areas outside the range of commuters. This could potentially lead to a two-tier countryside – a top tier of well-off commuters living side-by-side with retired or unemployed poorer people in gentrified rural areas within an hour's travelling distance of Riga and the more important regional urban centres, beyond which the countryside is emptied of all but the older people and others trapped by unemployment or poverty.

CONCLUSIONS

This research has pointed to some interesting conclusions. The research questions can be answered as follows.

The main factors that affect whether people will live (or continue to live) in the countryside are the availability of services and jobs, in that order, affected depending on whether one is a rural or urban dweller by family background and childhood history. Public policy therefore needs to address this in the way that, for example, EU structural funds are put to use. This has been recognised in the Lisbon plans but possibly, the importance of services has not been as clear as it has emerged from this research. The picture may change as the generation who were below 20 years of age move into the labour market and start families, especially those with a higher education. They are less likely to want to stay in the countryside than the generations above them or to want to bring up their children there. The continued drift of young people away from the countryside is likely to lead to an increasing proportion of the rural population being older, poorer and with more restricted access to services, leading to socially excluded groups, especially in remoter or geographically marginal areas.

The attachment of people to the countryside landscape remains strong and seems to be one of the factors holding people there despite the problems of social and economic conditions. However, while there may be some gentrification of the countryside by those moving out from urban back to rural areas closer to cities and regional urban centres, it is possible that the overall degree of attachment will decline over time, to some extent as the proportion of people brought up in the countryside reduces.

The likely prognoses for the future of the countryside, socially, economically and environmentally are difficult to predict but the drivers are visible. If the economy catches up with other developed European economies, the push and pull factors for migration out of Latvia will reduce and many of those working away will be more likely to return, especially those working in the agricultural and construction sectors with families left behind in the countryside. If the economic disparities between the capital and regional centres reduce, the drift of people to Riga will probably also reduce but the commuting distance/time threshold will probably remain important in terms of those places that will retain a viable population and those that will continue to become depopulated. The improvements in infrastructure may widen the radius of commuting to include more of the countryside.

If tourism develops, this will help the economies of the more attractive areas, which also tend to be the least viable for agriculture. Public policy should therefore be aimed at developing tourism and in helping people to develop tourism infrastructure. This will also provide employment. However, the landscape is the main asset and needs to be looked after, so that landscape management through farming, forestry and the application of EU support measures will be necessary.

Latvia, as demonstrated in the introduction, is a somewhat typical example of a CEE country and it could be expected that similar issues concerning the social, economic and physical environment of the countryside can be found in the other countries.

AKNOWLEDGEMENTS
The authors wish to acknowledge the support of a British Council grant in the funding of this research.

REFERENCES

Atkinson, R. (2000) Combating social exclusion in Europe: The new urban policy challenge. Urban Studies, Vol. 37, (5-6) pp. 1037-1055.

Barker, L. and D. Connolly (2006) Analysis of the prevalence and pattern of long distance commuting in Scotland. Scottish Household Survey/Transport Research Planning Group Topic Report. (Edinburgh: Scottish Executive.)

BBC news http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/4786134.stm visited 16 Dec 2007

Bell, S. ed. (2003) Crossplan: integrated, participatory landscape planning as a tool for rural development Edinburgh: Forestry Commission.

Bell. S. (2004) The social value of nature in the East Midlands of England in Kovarik, I and S Körner. eds *Wild urban woodlands*, (Berlin: Springer)

Bell, S., Z. Penēze, O. Nikodemus, A. Montarzino. (2008) Perceptions of the Latvian landscape during social and economic transformations. In Place and Location VI, Näripea, E., V. Sarapik, J. Tomberg (eds) (Tallinn: Place and Location.)

Bell, S. and A. Montarzino, (2007) Landscape perception as a reflection of quality of life and social exclusion in rural areas: what does it mean in an expanded Europe? In Open Space People Space, Ward Thompson, C. and P. Travlou, (Eds) (London: Taylor and Francis,)

Bell, S., Z. Penēze, O. Nikodemus, A. Montarzino and I. Grīne (2007) The value of Latvian rural landscapes. Pp. 347-363 in Roca, Z., T. Spek, T. Terkenli, T. Plieninger, and F. Höchtl eds., European landscapes and lifestyles: the Mediterranean and beyond. (Lisbon: Edições Universitárias Lusófonas.)

Bell, S., L. Tyrvainen, , T. Sievanen, , U. Proebstl, and M. Simpson, (2007) Outdoor recreation and nature tourism: A European perspective. Living Reviews of Landscape Research, 1, (2007), 2. http://landscaperesearch.livingreviews.org/Articles/lrlr-2007-2/

Borg, I. and S. Shye, (1995) Facet Theory: Form and Content (London Sage.)

Busmanis, P., A. Zobena, I. Grinfelde and I. Dzalbe (2001) Privatisation and soil in Latvia – land abandonment paper presented at seminar on Sustainable Agriculture in Central and

Eastern European Countries: The Environmental Effects of Transition and Needs for Change, Nitra, Slovakia

Canter D. (1977) The psychology of place. (London: Architectural Press.)

Christiou, A. (2005) Socio-economic analysis supporting the agricultural policy in the EU new member states and candidate countries. (Seville: Institute for Prospective Technological Studies.)

Clark, W.A.V., Y Huang and S. Withers (2003) Does Commuting Distance Matter? Commuting Tolerance and Residential Change, regional Science and Urban Economics 33, 199-221, 2003

Council of Europe (2004) European Landscape Convention. http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/Conventions/Landscape/default_en.asp visited on June 21 2008

Deller, S., T. Tsung-Hsiu, D. Marcouiller and D. English (2001) The role of amenities and quality of life in rural economic growth. American Journal of Agricultural Economics 83 (2) pp.352-365

European Commission, Directorate General for Employment, S.A.A.E.O. & E2,U. (2005) Report on social inclusion 2005: an analysis of the National Action Plans on Social Inclusion (2004-2006). Submitted by the 10 new member states. Luxembourg: European Communities.

Eurostat http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu visited on 16 Dec 2007

Fahey, T., C. Whelan, and B. Maître (2005) First European quality of life survey: income inequalities and deprivation. (Dublin: European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions.)

FAO (2000) European Forest Sector Outlook Study http://www.fao.org/forestry/29648/en/lva/ visite don 22 June 2008

Government of Latvia (2005) National Lisbon Programme for Latvia. http://www.em.gov.lv/em/images/modules/items/item_file_11635_2.pdf visited on 22 June 2008.

Grave, Z. L. and M. Lūse, (1990). Designing and practice of rural settlement in Latvia. Proceedings of the Latvian Academy of Sciences 7, pp. 76–85 (in Russian).

Hazans, M. (2003) Determinants of inter-regional migration in the Baltic countries. 43rd Congress of European Regional Science Association, 27-30 August 2003 (Jyväskylä: Baltic International Centre for Economic Policy.)

IAMO (2004) The future of rural areas in the CEE new member states. Report by Network for Independent experts. (Halle: Institute für Agarentwicklung in Mittel- und Osteuropa)

Kelly, G. (1955) Principles of personal construct psychology Vol. I-II. (New York: Norton.)

Kinsella J., S. Wilson, F. de Jong and H. Renting (2000) Pluriactivity as a livelihood strategy in Irish farm households and its role in rural development. Sociologia Ruralis, 40 (4), pp. 481-496(16)

Latvian Statistical Bureau http://www.csb.lv/avidus.cfm visited on 16 Dec 2007

Lerman, Z. (2000) Agriculture in transition economies: from common heritage to divergence. Agricultural Economics 1481, pp. 1-20.

Lerman, Z., C. Csaki and G. Feder, (2004) Evolving farm structures and land use patterns in former socialist countries. Quarterly Journal of International Agriculture 43, (4) pp. 309-335.

Lūse M. and A. Jakobsone (1990) Development of the idea of country villages. Proceedings of the Latvian Academy of Sciences 7 pp. 87–97 (in Russian).

MacDonald, D., J. R. Crabtree. G.Wiesinger, T. Dax, N. Stamous, et al (2000) Agricultural abandonment in mountain areas of Europe: Environmental consequences and policy response**.** Journal of Environmental Management 59, pp. 47–69.

Melbārde Z., O. Nikodemus, and M. Rozīte (2002) Latvijas Ğeografija (Latvian geography) (Riga: Zvaigzne ABC.)

Melluma, A. (1994) Metamorphoses of Latvian landscapes during fifty years of Soviet rule. Geojournal 33 (1), pp.55-62.

Menshikov, V. (2002) Security in Latvia in the beginning of the 21st century: sociological aspects. Faculty of Social Science, Institute of Sociological Investigations, Daugavpils University, Latvia http://www.erc.gr/english/d&scrn/torun-papers/session1/Mensikovs_kongress.pdf visited on 16 Dec 2007

Ministry of Agriculture (2002) Annual report of SAPARD programme. (Riga: Ministry of Agriculture.)

Musterd, S. and W. Ostendorf (1998) Segregation, polarisation and social exclusion in metropolitan areas. Pp. 1-16 in Musterd, S. and W. Ostendorf, eds. Urban segregation and the welfare state: inequality and exclusion in metropolitan areas. (London: Routledge.)

Nikodemus, O., S. Bell, I. Grine, and I. Liepins, (2005) The impact of economic, social and political factors on the landscape structure of the Vidzeme uplands in Latvia. Landscape and Urban Planning 70, pp. 57-67.

OECD (2007) International Migration Outlook 2007, Paris: OECD Publications, 2007

Ogg, J. (2005) Social exclusion and insecurity among older Europeans: the influence of welfare regimes. Ageing and Society 25, pp. 69-90.

Robila, M. (2007) Eastern European Immigrants in the United States: a sociodemographic profile. Social Science Journal 44, (1), pp.113-125.

Rolls, M. (2001) Review of farm management extension programmes in Central and Eastern European Countries. FAO, Sub-regional office for Eastern and Central Europe. http://www.fao.org/regional/SEUR/FM_Extension_CEE.pdf visited on 16 Dec 2007

Schoorl, J.J., L. Heering, I. Esveldt, G. Groenewold, R. F. van der Erf, A. M. Bosch, H. de Valk and B. J. de Bruijn (2000) Push and pull factors of international migration: a comparative report. Luxembourg, Eurostat, Theme 1 General Statistics

Shvangiradze, M., M. Gillenwater, and T. Dallman (2000). Latvia. Report on the in-depth review of the second national communication of Latvia. UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/idr/lat02.pdf visited on 16 Dec 2007

Shye, S., D. Elizur and M. Hoffman (1994) Introduction to facet theory; content design and intrinsic data analysis in behavioural research (Thousand Oaks: Sage.)

Spencer, D. (1997) Counter-urbanisation and rural depopulation revisited: landowners, planners and rural development. Journal of Rural Studies 13 (1), pp. 75-92.

Stenning, A. (2004) Urban change and the localities. Pp. 87-108 in Bradshaw, M. and A. Stenning eds., East Central Europe and the former Soviet Union: the Post-socialist states. (Harlow: Pearson Education.)

Stockdale, A. (2005) Migration: prerequisite for rural economic regeneration? In Journal of Rural Studies, 22 (3), pp.354-366.

Ward Thompson, C.and M. Scott Myers (2003) Interviews and questionnaires in Bell, S. ed. Crossplan: Integrated, participatory planning as a tool for rural development. (Edinburgh: Forestry Commission)

Ward Thompson, C., P. Aspinall, S. Bell, C. Findlay, J. Wherrett and P. Travlou (2004) Open Space and Social Inclusion: Local Woodland Use in Central Scotland. (Edinburgh: Forestry Commission)

Westhoek H.J., M. van den Berg and J.A. Bakkes (2006). Scenario development to explore the future of Europe's rural areas. Agriculture, Ecosystems and Environment 114, pp. 7–20.

World Bank, (2006) Latvia: Country brief 2006 http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/ECA/eca.nsf/Countries/Latvia/BCD1704EBBF1098B85256C3C007E9978?OpenDocument visited on 16 Dec 2007